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Istook Secures Funds for Maintenance Center

Washington, DC -- Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) announced Wednesday that \$810,000 was included in a spending bill for the Oklahoma City Maintenance Repair and Overhaul Technology Center (MROTC) to be located across from Tinker Air Force Base. Istook requested last month that the funds be included in the VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2003.

“This center will combine the best of what Oklahoma has to offer with the best that others can bring to Oklahoma,” said Istook. **“It will expand our aviation expertise and resources that are vital to our national defense. And it will provide major economic opportunities to Oklahomans. We need for this to complement the aviation technology that is already located around Tinker, so the current facilities and the new facilities boost each other. It is the kind of project I’m proud to support, and I’m pleased that others in Congress saw the value in this project as well.”**

The \$810,000 grant, which is over three times the size of the average economic development grant in the bill, will enable design work to go forward on the center.

The center is to be a public/private partnership between the state of Oklahoma; Oklahoma County; Oklahoma City; The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce; Batelle, a defense contractor; industry members; and the Oklahoma university and vo-tech system.

“Without Congressman Istook’s efforts, the funding and strategy planning for Phase II might still be in the ‘thinking’ stages,” said Russell M. Perry, Oklahoma’s Secretary of Commerce. **“Congressman Istook hand delivered the amended appropriations request to the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee. It is refreshing for Oklahoma to have such representation in Congress.”**

The center will be designed to create new jobs, provide educational opportunities, and allow technology transfers for economic expansion in the region.

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce has estimated that that the completed center could generate an annual payroll of over \$100 million in direct and indirect jobs and over \$12 million in tax revenues.